

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A flanged connection designed to connect a gas-filled spring in a machine tool, said flanged connection comprising an upper flange half, a lower flange half, a fixing element, and a locking ring, said upper flange half and said lower flange half each including a through-opening designed to receive at least a portion of the gas-filled spring, said upper flange half and said lower flange half designed to be secured together, said upper flange half and said lower flange half designed to engage the gas-filled spring when said upper flange half and said lower flange half are secured together, said locking ring ~~[[designed to engage]]~~ engaging said fixing element and at least one of said flange halves when said upper flange half and said lower flange half are secured together, said locking ring designed to engage and secure the gas-filled spring in said flange connection ~~by at least partial insertion into a groove of complementary design around the gas-filled spring~~ while being fixed in position between said upper flange half and said lower flange half when said upper flange half and said lower flange half are secured together, said fixing element designed to movably engagable with at least one of said flange halves when said upper flange half and said lower flange half are secured together, said fixing element designed to apply a clamping force on said locking ring that is positioned at least partially around the gas-filled spring when said upper flange half and said lower flange half are secured together, said locking ring and said fixing element being at least two separate components, said fixing element designed to movably engage and apply a contact force against said locking ring when said upper flange half and said lower flange half are secured together, at least one of said flange halves has an inside surface having an inclined section in relation to a central axis of said flanged connection, said fixing element including an inclined section on an outside surface of said fixing element, said inclined sections of said flange

section and said fixing element designed to engage one another to cause said fixing element to move toward the gas-filled spring thereby causing said locking ring to also move toward the gas-filled spring and to increase said clamping force on the gas-filled spring.

Claims 2-4 (Canceled).

5. (Currently Amended) The flanged connection according to claim 1, wherein at least one of said flange halves on its inside has a section inclined in relation to the central axis of the flanged connection, said inclined section designed to bring a correspondingly inclined section on the outside of said fixing element into engagement in order to produce the clamping force, said inclined sections designed to be movable relative to one another when said upper flange half and said lower flange are secured together said fixing element is spaced from said lower flange half after said flange halves are secured together and securing the gas-filled spring to said flange connection.

6. (Currently Amended) The flanged connection according to claim 5, wherein said fixing element has a groove running along [[its]] said outside surface and designed to [[bring]] engage a projecting part arranged on the on said inside surface of [[one of]] said upper flange halves having the inclined section into engagement half, said groove designed to engage said projecting part and to limit movement of said fixing element relative to said upper flange half.

7. (Currently Amended) The flanged connection according to claim 1, wherein said fixing element has a recess along [[its]] an inside surface, said recess designed to receive at least a portion of said locking ring.

8. (Currently Amended) The flanged connection according to claim 1, wherein said flanged connection is fitted to the machine tool by at least one fastener, said at least one fastener designed to generate the said upper flange half and lower flange half are connected together by a plurality of fasteners, said plurality of fasteners designed to draw together said flange halves and cause said fixing element to move said locking ring toward the gas-filled spring, thereby generating said clamping force between said fixing element and the gas-filled spring and [[to generate]] generating a contact force between said fixing element and said locking ring.

9. (Previously Presented) The flanged connection according to claim 1, wherein the clamping force is designed to prevent rotation of the gas-filled spring.

10. (Currently Amended) A method of fixing a gas-filled spring in a machine tool, by which method an upper flange half and a lower flange half of a flanged connection which can be joined together are fitted at least partially around and engage the gas-filled spring and a locking ring arranged between the flange halves is at least partially fitted around the gas-filled spring in a groove of complementary design and is fixed between said flange halves securing the gas-filled spring, wherein, when joining together said flange halves, a clamping force is applied around the gas-filled spring by a fixing element that [[applied]] applies a force on said locking ring, said locking ring and said fixing element being at least two separate components, said fixing element designed to movably engage and apply a contact force against said locking ring when said upper flange half and said lower flange half are secured together, said fixing element designed to movably [[engagable]] engage with at least one of said flange halves when said upper flange half and said lower flange half are secured together, at least one of said flange halves has an inside surface having an inclined

section in relation to a central axis of said flanged connection, said fixing element including an inclined section on an outside surface of said fixing element, said inclined sections of said flange section and said fixing element designed to engage one another to cause said fixing element to move toward the gas-filled spring thereby causing said locking ring to also move toward the gas-filled spring and to increase said clamping force on the gas-filled spring.

Claims 11-13 (Canceled).

14. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 10, wherein ~~a section inclined in relation to the central axis of the flanged connection on the inside of at least one of said flange halves is brought into engagement with a correspondingly inclined section on the outside of said fixing element, said fixing element being applied around the gas-filled spring with the clamping force and where appropriate being applied against said locking ring with a contact force, said inclined sections designed to be movable relative to one another when said upper flange half and said lower flange half are secured together said fixing element is spaced from said lower flange half after said flange halves are secured together and securing the gas-filled spring to said flange connection.~~

15. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 14, wherein a groove running along the outside of said fixing element is brought into engagement with a projecting part arranged on one of said flange halves having the inclined section.

16. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 10, wherein the clamping force is generated when said flanged connection is fitted to the machine tool and that the clamping force is of a predefined magnitude.

17. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 16, wherein the magnitude of the clamping force is adjusted by adjusting the tightening torque of fasteners used for fitting the flanged connection to the machine tool.

18. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 10, wherein said clamping force serves to prevent rotation of the gas-filled spring.

19. (Currently Amended) A flanged connection designed to connect a spring arrangement gas-filled spring having a circular outer body to a machine tool, said flanged connection comprising an upper flange half, a lower flange half, a fixing element, and a locking ring, said upper flange half and said lower flange half each include a through-opening designed to receive at least a portion of the body of the gas-filled spring, said upper flange half and said lower flange half designed to be secured together, ~~at least one of said upper flange halves including~~ includes an inclined section ~~[[in]]~~ on an inside ~~[[face]]~~ surface that faces the body of the gas-filled spring, said inclined section inclined in relation to a central axis of said flanged connection, said fixing element including an inclined section on an outside surface of said fixing element, said locking ring designed to be at least partially inserted into a groove on ~~an outer surface of~~ the body of the gas-filled spring, said inclined surface of said fixing element designed to movably engage said inclined section of said upper flange half and to apply a clamping force on said locking ring that is positioned in the groove on ~~the outer~~

surface of the body of the gas-filled spring when said upper flange half and said lower flange half are secured together, said fixing element designed to move toward the gas-filled spring and to cause said clamping ring to move toward the gas-filled spring thereby causing said locking ring to increase said clamping force on the gas-filled spring when said upper flange half and said lower flange half are secured together, said clamping force designed to at least partially secure the gas-filled spring to said flanged connection and to inhibit movement of [[said]] the gas-filled spring in said flanged connection, said locking ring has a generally circular cross-sectional shape prior to being secured between said flange halves, said locking ring and said fixing element are at least two separate components.

20. (Previously Presented) The flanged connection as defined in claim 19, wherein said through-opening in at least one of said flange halves is circular.

21. (Previously Presented) The flanged connection as defined in claim 19, wherein said fixing element includes a recess, said recess designed to receive at least a portion of said locking ring.

22. (Previously Presented) The flanged connection as defined in claim 20, wherein said fixing element includes a recess, said recess designed to receive at least a portion of said locking ring.

23. (Previously Presented) The flanged connection as defined in 19, wherein said flange halves are connected to by at least one fastener.

24. (Previously Presented) The flanged connection as defined in 22, wherein said flange halves are connected to by at least one fastener.

25. (Previously Presented) The flanged connection as defined in 19, wherein said fixing element only engages said upper flange half when said upper flange half and said lower flange half are secured together.

26. (Previously Presented) The flanged connection as defined in 24, wherein said fixing element only engages said upper flange half when said upper flange half and said lower flange half are secured together.

Claims 27-28 (Canceled).

29. (Previously Presented) The flanged connection as defined in claim 19, wherein said fixing element is designed to move downwardly toward said locking ring and apply said clamping force on said locking ring when said upper flange half and said lower flange half are secured together.

30. (Currently Amended) The flanged connection as defined in claim [[28]] 26, wherein said fixing element is designed to move downwardly toward said locking ring and apply said clamping force on said locking ring when said upper flange half and said lower flange half are secured together.

31. (Previously Presented) The flanged connection as defined in claim 19, wherein said flanged connection includes only one fixing element and only one locking ring.

32. (Previously Presented) The flanged connection as defined in claim 30, wherein said flanged connection includes only one fixing element and only one locking ring.

33. (Previously Presented) The flanged connection as defined in claim 19, wherein said lower flange half includes a recess designed to receive at least a portion of said locking ring.

34. (Previously Presented) The flanged connection as defined in claim 32, wherein said lower flange half includes a recess designed to receive at least a portion of said locking ring.

35. (New) The flanged connection as defined in claim 19, wherein said upper flange half includes a projecting part on said inside surface, said fixing element including a groove running along said outside surface, said groove designed to engage said projecting part and limit movement of said fixing element relative to said upper flange half.

36. (New) The flanged connection as defined in claim 34, wherein said upper flange half includes a projecting part on said inside surface, said fixing element including a groove running along said outside surface, said groove designed to engage said projecting part and limit movement of said fixing element relative to said upper flange half.

37. (New) The flanged connection as defined in claim 19, wherein said fixing element and said locking ring each including spaced ends to enable a diameter of said fixing element and said locking ring to reduce when said flange halves are secured together.

38. (New) The flanged connection as defined in claim 36, wherein said fixing element and said locking ring each including spaced ends to enable a diameter of said fixing element and said locking ring to reduce when said flange halves are secured together.

39. (New) A gas-filled spring and flanged connection, said flange connected designed to connect said gas-filled spring to a machine tool, said gas-filled spring having a circular outer body and a C-shaped groove, said flanged connection comprising an upper flange half, a lower flange half, a fixing element, and a locking ring, said upper flange half and said lower flange half each include a through-opening designed to receive at least a portion of said body of the gas-filled spring, said upper flange half and said lower flange half designed to be secured together, said upper flange including an inclined section on an inside surface that faces said body of said gas-filled spring, said inclined section inclined in relation to a central axis of said flanged connection, said fixing element including an inclined section on an outside surface of said fixing element, said locking ring designed to be at least partially inserted into said C-shaped groove on said body of said gas-filled spring, said inclined surface of said fixing element designed to movably engage said inclined section of said upper flange half and to apply a clamping force on said locking ring that is positioned in said C-shaped groove on said body of said gas-filled spring when said upper flange half and said lower flange half are secured together, said fixing element including a recess designed to receive at least a portion of said locking ring, said lower flange half including a recess designed to receive at least

a portion of said locking ring, said fixing element only engaging said upper flange half when said upper flange half and said lower flange half are secured together, said fixing element designed to move toward said body of said gas-filled spring and to cause said clamping ring to move toward said body of said gas-filled spring thereby causing said locking ring to increase said clamping force on said gas-filled spring when said upper flange half and said lower flange half are secured together, said clamping force designed to inhibit movement of said gas-filled spring in said flanged connection, said locking ring having a generally circular cross-sectional shape prior to being secured between said flange halves, said locking ring and said fixing element being at least two separate components, said fixing element and said locking ring each including spaced ends to enable a diameter of said fixing element and said locking ring to reduce when said flange halves are secured together.

40. (New) The flanged connection as defined in claim 39, wherein said flanged connection includes only one fixing element and only one locking ring.

41. (New) The flanged connection as defined in claim 39, wherein said upper flange half includes a projecting part on said inside surface, said fixing element including a groove running along said outside surface, said groove designed to engage said projecting part and limit movement of said fixing element relative to said upper flange half.

42. (New) The flanged connection as defined in claim 40, wherein said upper flange half includes a projecting part on said inside surface, said fixing element including a groove running along said outside surface, said groove designed to engage said projecting part and limit movement

of said fixing element relative to said upper flange half.